

Honor the Grandmothers: Dakota and Lakota Women Tell Their Stories

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

"Honor the Grandmothers: Dakota and Lakota Women Tell Their Stories." *The Annals of Iowa* 61 (2002), 97-98.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.10555>

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The story of Junnie Putman's daily life puts a human face on a hard life that required long hours of heavy labor without any guarantee of a big catch at the end of the day. Every workday Putnam put himself at risk to the whims of the wind and weather that could make the Mississippi more treacherous than a stormy sea. Even without nasty weather, the cold waters and currents of the river could claim a careless man's life in a few minutes.

Junnie Putman was the best among his peers as a fisherman and as a hunter/trapper. Younker shows great respect for the skill and knowledge it took for Putnam to succeed as a commercial fisherman, but it is also obvious that Younker is paying homage to a dying breed of men and to a livelihood that has nearly vanished from the river. In this respect, Younker preserves a piece of commercial fishing's history by preserving the personal history of Junnie Putman.

Younker's book will disappoint readers looking for a scholarly book about life on the river. The book has no index, footnotes, or historical sources to place the book in context with other accounts of river life. The book most closely resembles an oral history, but it lacks the focused interviews typical of oral histories. The strength of Younker's book is in the narrative that tells the complex story of one man's life as a commercial fisherman. The story of Junnie Putman has within it the sort of details about daily life that should make it a good read for anyone interested in life on the Mississippi.

Honor the Grandmothers: Dakota and Lakota Women Tell Their Stories, edited by Sarah Penman. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2000. 146 pp. Illustrations. \$29.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

Reviewer Susan C. Peterson is professor of history emeritus at the University of North Dakota. Her research and writing have focused on the history of women in the western United States.

At the outset of *Honor the Grandmothers*, Sarah Penman makes evident the importance of oral tradition to Lakota culture. A testimony by Celane Not Help Him humanizes the typical American history textbook's discussions of Indian history: "After the massacre, Grandmother Earth covered them with a white blanket; everything was covered with a blanket of snow. Those frozen bodies lay there three days and they [the soldiers] just pick them up and throw them in that trench over there, and nobody didn't even pray or anything; not even a pipe carrier." Celane Not Help Him also shares the story of Big Foot, who was remembered to say, "Do what you're told. If I'm not sick like

this we could even escape but the reason why I don't want you to start trouble is there's a lot of old people, there's a lot of children."

Stella Pretty Sounding Flute talks about the Dakota tradition of honoring people with star quilts. She tells of the significance of the four and eventually eight points on the star quilt and the colors used. Star quilts have become so popular that they are now mass produced.

Sarah Penman makes clear the role of the grandmothers in maintaining cultural traditions. Through these transcripts, readers learn how many traditions, including food preparation and quill work, language and family structure, have been threatened, in some cases by boarding school culture, which forbade the use of native languages and traditions. The grandmothers in this book recognize this loss and lament not having passed some of these traditions on to their children. As grandmothers, they now recognize the importance of teaching these cultural values to younger generations. Cecilia Hernandez Montgomery, an activist in Indian communities, has talked to her grandson's class about Indian traditions at the request of his teacher. As she says, "It's good to pass it on to the next generation."

Love in a Global Village: A Celebration of Intercultural Families in the Midwest, by Jessie Carroll Grearson and Lauren B. Smith. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2001. xxi, 284 pp. Illustrations. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Barbara Posadas is professor of history at Northern Illinois University. Her research and writing have focused on Filipino and interracial immigrants in Chicago.

In *Love in a Global Village*, writing professor Jessie Carroll Grearson and English professor Lauren B. Smith profile 15 intercultural couples living in the Midwest with whom they conducted extended "conversations." Both married to men from other nations, the authors intend their interviews as windows into the "dynamics" involved in creating and maintaining cross-cultural households: the organization of their homes, the blending of the adults' diverse cultural identities, the transmission of culture to their children, the "potential losses and misunderstandings . . . involved in these choices" (xiii). Separate chapters on each couple are arranged chronologically: young men and women, including a lesbian couple, just beginning their lives together; families rearing children of blended backgrounds; and those together for years, including the final story of a Jewish American widow who married her Afghan husband in Chicago in 1945 and lived with him in his homeland for 24 years before she and their college-age children resettled in the United States after his death in 1971.

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